A Flavour of the Label

June 1996 A Parlophone Publication Issue 5

Meanwhile, back where music really impales you come Mansun, the bastard sons of The Verve and a mother unknown. Back before walking through a record shop was like walking through a library, back before the whole bloody world was one seething gang of knowingness, back even before Camden was the centre of the universe, there was and always will be great music that exists in spite of everything else.

Wasn't it great when an old punk(Siouxsie, actually) recently declared that it was spite that made them form and continue a group? Because just as there will always be a media to invent a movement there will always be a group of people who will come along and, like Dickensian waifs outside a toff's house, will peer in the window, assimilate what they want from a scene and forge their own path regardless.

Not that Mansun have had a rough ride. It's just that they have steadfastly refused to be rushed or sucked in or hyped or moulded into something they're not. If most groups are little gangs who invite you to join, Mansun are the ones in the corner looking on in bemusement at the scene, in their case from their native Chester.

"Mansun Two EP", the juvenile delinquent brother of "Mansun One EP" is released on Parlophone on June 3. Featuring the already classic "Take It Easy Chicken"(originally released on 7" vinyl only, it sold-out in less than a week),the EP also features live favourite "Drastic Sturgeon" plus "The Greatest Pain" and "Moronica".

Prolific or what? That's eight tracks released over two EPs with a further four already written for the NEXT EP and then the album to follow. Is that an explosion of creativity bulging from their brains and if so why can't, ahem, lesser bands have some? No rip off b side scenarios here either - unpolished gems. Great lyrics too, which our acknowledged great bards of rock would kill for. God, it's so great to hear cynicism and anger expressed with such humour and amidst such a great bloody noise.

Mansun have just finished a tour with Shed Seven. They will be playing their own headlining dates in June; you should see them.

CECiL

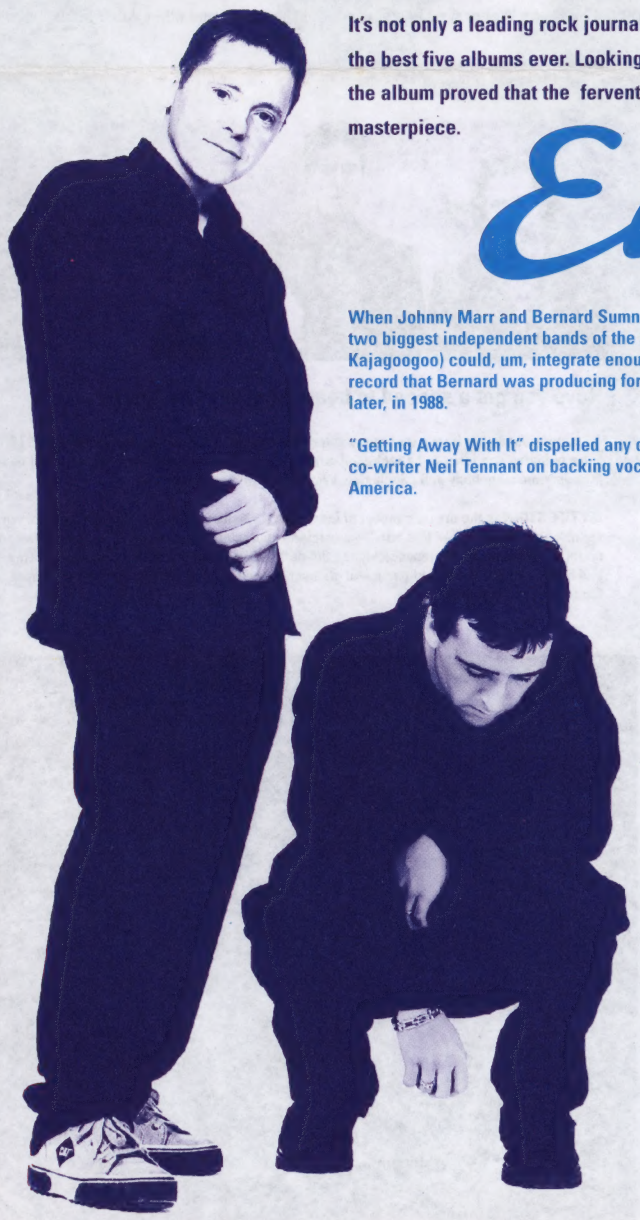
Cutting through the mass of dullards who think the key to success is singing in a Mockney accent and cribbing Blur B-sides, Cecil are rapidly revealing themselves as a band that can pull off the rare trick of being musically accomplished and frighteningly powerful.

The point is amply demonstrated by their new single "Measured" -a driving, incendiary creature that somehow manages to betray a sensitivity that's really rather touching. Any lingering impression that they depend on brute force alone should be rapidly dispelled.

That said, it's Cecil's primal intensity that first draws you in. From their formation in mid-1993, their now infamous "short sharp shock" approach has been their trump card: singer Ste Williams bleeds bulgy-veined fury from his every pore, somehow conveying the idea that he's in charge of a group who could conceivably turn out to be, oooh, a latter-day Stooges.

The thing is, there's more to them than that. Following their debut 45, "No Excuses" (little radio play on account of Ste's Tourettes-esque vocal), they released the equally feisty "My Neck" - and then recorded a piano-and-vocals version whose subtlety was staggering.

In short, they're branching out. "Measured" is released on June 17; a national headlining tour rolls around the country during June and July; and then comes the debut album, produced by Barrett Jones (Foo Fighters). On the evidence amassed so far, it's going to be a multi-mooded delight.



It's not only a leading rock journalist who recently restated his theory that the first Electronic album is one of the best five albums ever. Looking through press cuttings from the time, the euphoria that greeted the release of the album proved that the fervent anticipation of the project was not unrewarded. "Electronic" was, and is, a masterpiece.

Electronic

When Johnny Marr and Bernard Sumner got together to form Electronic some wondered whether two leading elements from the two biggest independent bands of the Eighties (The Smiths and New Order, in case you thought the decade belonged to Kajagoogoo) could, um, integrate enough, maan, to establish a new sound. The duo had first met when Johnny played on a record that Bernard was producing for Mike Pickering's group Quando Quango in 1983, but Electronic was formed five years later, in 1988.

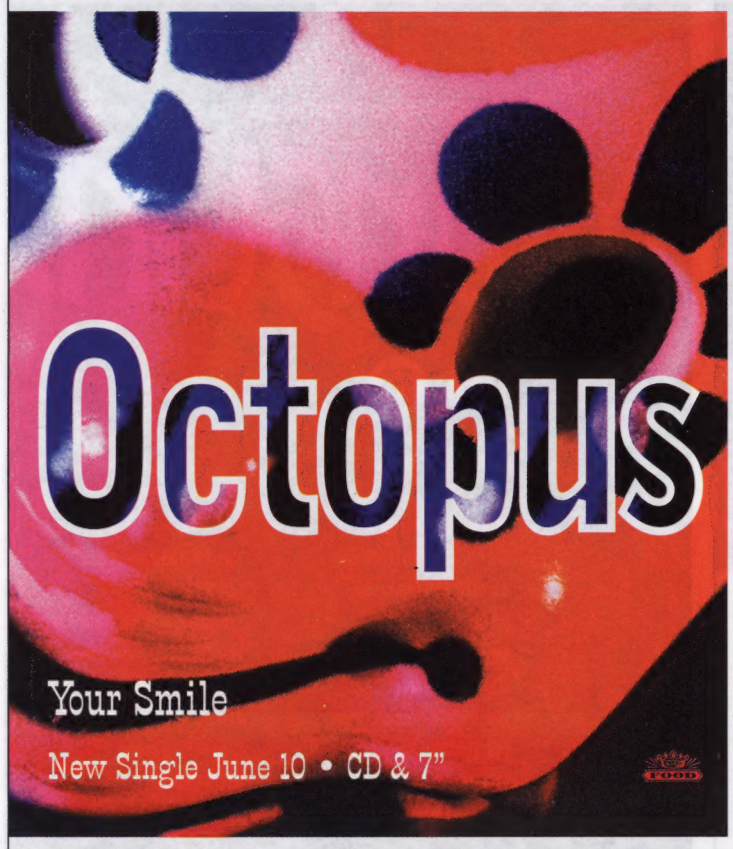
"Getting Away With It" dispelled any doubts. Electronic's debut single was released in the UK on December 4, 1989. Featuring co-writer Neil Tennant on backing vocals, the single reached No.11 in the UK and went on to sell more than 350,00 copies in America.

The album, including its' three hit singles("Getting Away With It" was followed by "Get The Message" and "Feel Every Beat") went even further; "a finely judged blend of winsome pop and vigorous dance beats", "Electronic play pop music the only way it should be played - ecstatically", "the unimpeachable pop triumph of the age" and, of course, "one of the greatest albums of all time"(Melody Maker)were just some of the tributes laid at its' feet.

Five years passed. Electronic live shows - their debut sold-out stadium show in LA was also, incredibly, the first time their guests Pet Shop Boys had played live in America. A surprise gig at the Hacienda. Pet Shop Boys' collaboration on the wonderful "Disappointed" single. Factory Records' demise. Signing to Parlophone. New Order. The The. The Pretenders. The Hacienda. The K Klass(ha ha). Manchester. Remixes. Writing. Working with Kraftwerk's Karl Bartos. It's funny how time passes...

Well, let no one accuse them of rushing things! For, at last, June 1996 sees the release of a brand new Electronic single. "Forbidden City" was written by Johnny and Bernard with Karl Bartos and is one of 13 new tracks that feature on the album "Raise The Pressure" which will be released on July 8. A peerless collection, it surpasses the first album in every respect. The songs. That voice. The guitarist who, without a doubt, inspired a generation(check out recent Noel Gallagher and Bernard Butler interviews). The wistfulness. The optimism. The shivers up the spine as you hear "Forbidden City" and realise they're back and they've pulled it off again. The broad grin that breaks out when you hear the joy that is track 2, "For You" and can't wait to play it loud in summer with all the windows open. Denise Johnson's vocals on "Dark Angel".....and that's just the first three tracks. Not for a long time has an album seemed so COMPLETE, without any excess baggage.

This week, the same "Melody Maker" journalist who'd praised the "Electronic" album had a sneak preview of "Raise The Pressure". Judging by his reaction, maybe it's time to bump one of the other four best albums ever out of the list to make way for a newcomer.



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CROWDED HOUSE Recurring Dream
(The Very Best of Crowded House)

Over the next few months you might hear a lot of Crowded House. Some songs you'll remember intimately - after all, 'Don't Dream its Over' and 'Weather With You' have passed into folk memory. That's expected. It'll be the others though, that catch you off guard. The way 'Four Seasons In One Day' injects fresh foreboding into the air like an oncoming storm; the unmistakable way that 'Distant Sun' has of identifying itself with a chorus you could gladly mistake for an old friend. It's the thing that Crowded House do best - slipping beneath your skin bearing all the hallmarks of Great Pop, so that before you can find out if the symptoms are normal, you mind's already made up. Crowded House, you see, are the nearest you'll get to a musical truth drug.

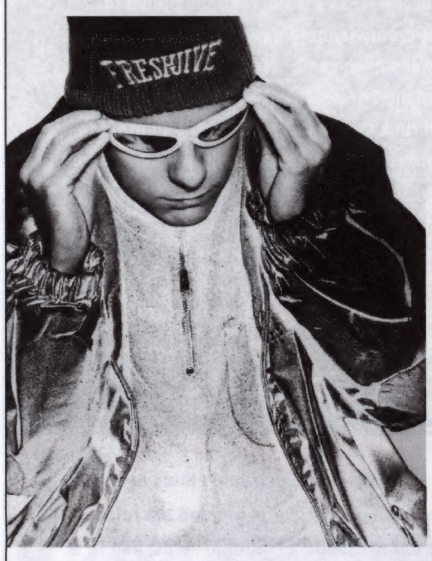
So, that seems like one good reason to put out a concise resume of Neil Finn's songs. Another reason for the release of 'Recurring Dream' lies in the fact that Crowded House have been together for 10 years. When Neil Finn and drummer Paul Hester dusted themselves down from the ashes of Split Enz, and welcomed Nick Seymour (bass/rollerblades) into the fold, there was no masterplan, just a desire to write some cool tunes very quickly and try them out on new audiences. Setting a trend that gathered apace for the next decade, new audiences responded with a zeal that suggested some kind of listener/band chemistry was afoot. Among those first songs were included 'When You Come' and the exultant embrace of 'Something So Strong' - both included here.

If you haven't seen Crowded House in concert, then have a listen to the second CD on 'Recurring Dream', which collects some of Crowded House's most memorable live appearances - improvised and otherwise. However, if you have seen them live, you certainly won't need prompting - you'll already know there's no group in the world like Crowded House, no Crowded House gig like the one you saw tonight. Whereas so many bands seem to fight against the spontaneity of a live situation in order to live up to their recorded work, Crowded House seem to thrive on it. For every moment of forlorn grace, there's always something just around the corner to keep you on your toes - be it the London gig when one fan, hardly able to contain himself, jumped on stage and stripped off; or that time the boys were so surprised by the volume of demand for their fourth encore that they ambled back on stage in their dressing gowns. If Crowded House's music reflects the wonderful cultural confusion of an Irish Catholic upbringing carried out in a New Zealand country town, the feeling Neil Finn's songs leave us with is much simpler. Even when playing those huge arenas so ill-equipped for intimacy, Crowded House have never had trouble turning events into the kind of family get-togethers you had as a kid.

Many 'Greatest Hits' compilations tend to come as postscripts to a band's demise or stop-gaps in periods of creative bankruptcy. Reports of Crowded House's death, we're delighted to say, have been completely made up. The chaps have already begun their fifth album, primed for 1997 release and three brand new tracks on here - 'Instinct', 'Not The Girl You Think You Are' and 'Everything Is Good For You' - suggest that creative juices are freely flowing.

Horse fans everywhere will be delighted that the debut Sparklehorse album, Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot, has been released in the UK. This is a record that has caught the imagination of music fans across the board and has been supported in equal measure critically. Already the NME have given the album 9/10, which is definitely a rare honour, Q gave it a **** review and Melody Maker have been supporters of the band too.

For their part, Sparklehorse continue to support the record by playing live as much as possible. May and June sees them tour the US as special guests of Cracker, whilst the band have promised to return to the UK in August for festival appearances and a headline tour. Before their return we strongly recommend that you give this brilliant debut a listen as it will certainly prove to be a record of the year.



PET SHOP BOYS

It's hard to believe that Pet Shop Boys have really had 26 Top 30 singles since "West End Girls" got to No.1 in 1985. But their "trick", apart from writing timeless, classic pop songs, is that they always relate to the contemporary. Although they would never "go rock", you could argue that their last EP track "The Truck Driver And His Mate", was their spin on a rock song. It also carried on the Pets fine tradition of recording new, quality songs for every b side, a tradition neatly exemplified in their "Alternative Pet Shop Boys" collection last year.

In the PR rush and gush that inevitably greets some of our "mature" songwriters' releases, it might be tempting to be swept up in the manufactured euphoria of it all. Pet Shop Boys, for all the accusations of cynicism and aloofness that are levelled at them, have always seemed more honest, less desperate than their peers. Whilst their contemporaries' every move seems plotted for years to come, the Pets seem to still exemplify a songwriting spirit that is true to their original intent.

Their fine songwriting continues with the release of the single "Se A Vida E" on Parlophone on August 12. The single, with a distinctly Spanish feel (the title, roughly translated means "that's the way life is"), is a great example of an "up" Pet Shop Boys song. Those who prefer their more reflective moments need only wait for the album which, whilst sounding very warm , contains moments of wistful tenderness to rival songs like "Liberation", "Dreaming Of The Queen" and "My October Symphony". In a career of many highs, this is the best record the duo have yet made.

The video for "Se A Vida E" was directed by Bruce Weber who has only ever agreed to do one other video in his career; that video was Pet Shop Boys' "Being Boring".

"Se A Vida E" will surely follow the "Before" EP straight into the Top 10.

The SUNDAYS

The Sundays formed in Bristol in summer 1988 as a duo, before Harriet and David moved to London where they teamed-up with Paul Brindley (bass) and Patrick Hannan (drums). The band were signed to Rough Trade after a string of low-key London gigs and a pile of rave reviews. Their debut single, 'Can't Be Sure', was released in January 1989 and topped the Indie Chart for two months (the single was later voted No. 1 in Peel's Festive Fifty). THE SUNDAYS toured with the Throwing Muses and then released the debut album READING, WRITING AND ARITHMETIC early in 1990. The album entered the grown-up Album Chart at No. 4 and achieved gold status within weeks.

Since the demise of Rough Trade in 1992 the album has been unavailable but is now reissued on Parlophone. The band themselves are currently working on a new album which will be released next year.

Have you got a second to hear about My Life Story ?

An impassioned plea from a war wiery veteran on the No. 69 bus? Not quite - MY LIFE STORY are a bubbling pop force to be reckoned with and as with every good story there should be an introduction, main body and conclusion. Well, here's the introduction.

MY LIFE STORY is the dream concept of insane arch musical visionary Jake Shillingford who spent 2 years in search of like minded musicians ending up with a band of 11 merry men and taking to the road. Their presence visited the darkest haunts of the 100 club and The Marquee and bought with it a world of pomp and glamour, indeed a veritable orchestral pop wonder and for certain one to behold.

MY LIFE STORY

Following the indie chart topping singles 'Girl A, Girl B, Boy C', 'Funny Ha Ha' and debut album 'Mornington Crescent' MY LIFE STORY have now found a new home in Parlophone and will be loosing their first single on an unsuspecting world very soon. NME said of them 'put them in the Albert Hall and make them famous' and The Independent described them as a heaven-sent hybrid of Dexy's Midnight Runners and "Poison Arrow" period ABC. So don't be caught unawares.

A brief introduction admittedly but watch out for the main main body soon to be revealed.

Electronic
Forbidden City
7" TC & CD • 24 JUNE
Parlophone

Take It Easy Chicken Drastic Sturgeon The Greatest Pain Moronica

Mansun.

TWO EP

Out Now On 7" CD MC

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5th BUCKLEY Tivoli
6th BATH Moles
8th HASTINGS Crypt
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11th LONDON Tabernacle
12th PORTSMOUTH Wedgewood Rooms
13th BEDFORD Esquires
15th SHEFFIELD Leadmill
16th HULL Adelphi
17th SOUTHAMPTON Joiners Arms
18th TUNBRIDGE WELLS Forum
20th STOKE The Stage
21st LEEDS Brighton Beach
22nd OXFORD Zodiac
30th ABERDEEN Pelican Club
31st DUNDEE University

Parlophone

Everclear are the Portland trio currently fulfilling all their early promise on this their second album, "Sparkle And Fade". In the US they have already sold a million copies of the record, spurred on by the success of the singles "Santa Monica" and "Heartspark Dollarsign". Repeating that success story in the UK began on 20th May when we released their first single from the album, "Heartspark Dollarsign". In that week the band also completed a couple of sold out live shows around the country as well as an appearance on Later With Jools.

everclear

As the band continue to grow in the UK they are balancing a busy schedule of worldwide demand. However, in the immediate future Everclear have promised to return to the UK in August for festival dates as well as more headline shows. The next single, "Santa Monica" will be scheduled for release at that time.

strangelove beautiful alone

out now - available on 7" and 2 CD formats

all formats feature rare tracks not available on the forthcoming album *'love and other demons'*

FOOD
Marketed by Parlophone

Dear Reader,

Welcome once again to 'Flavour', packed full of news, information and an exclusive Blur live CD offer!

As the summer approaches our thoughts naturally turn to the festival season and just how to compensate for this year's lack of Glastonbury. Well even without a weekend in Somerset, it's setting up to be a storming few months. Things pretty much kick off with Scotland's T In The Park on July 13th and 14th at which you can see Radiohead (headlining on Saturday night) along with the Foo Fighters, Cecil and new Food band The Supernaturals. A week later it's off to Stratford-Upon-Avon for the Phoenix Festival with the Foos once more, Cecil, Mazzy Starr and Strangelove.

Supergrass have been confirmed as very special guests at Pulp's two outdoor shows in July in Warrington and Chelmsford.

August brings us The Reading Festival which will include on the bill, The Butthole Surfers, The Jesus Lizard and Sparklehorse.

So let's all look forward to a long hot summer, great bands and great records.

Take It Easy,

The Editor

The Editor

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Live From Japan

Late last year Blur performed at Japan's legendary Budokan Hall as part of their 'Great Escape' world tour. The show has recently been released as an official live album, but only in Japan. However...fret not, the album is available for you to order direct through Flavour Of The Label. You should read the enclosed order form to find out how you can get this exclusive album. A cracking live show from the band and featuring 19 of their greatest songs including For Tomorrow, This Is A Low, Globe Alone, She's So High and Pop Scene.

The album is on double CD only with a 24 page colour booklet and is being made available for a very strictly limited period.

FREE MUSIC

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So listen to the tracks at your own leisure – it is a free country (allegedly). Don't take compact risks. Listen before you buy.

Sparklehorse • Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot

Everclear
Sparkle And Fade

Strangelove
Love And Other Demons

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Reading, Writing And Arithmetic

The debut album available for the first time since 1992

Includes
Can't Be Sure
Here's Where The Story Ends
My Finest Hour

Parlophone

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OUT 27 MAY

"Up to no good with no place to go but down...!"

Chrysalis

strangelove

On June 17th, Food/Parlophone band Strangelove release their second album, "Love & Other Demons", the follow-up to 1994's ambitious 66-minute debut, "Time For The Rest Of Your Life". "Love & Other Demons" includes the recent single, "Living With The Human Machines", as well as the forthcoming single "Beautiful Alone" plus "Sway", "Casualties" and "She's Everywhere" (all of which have appeared in the band's live set) and the awesome epic "Sea Of Black".

A Brief History...

Strangelove's first gig was at Bath Moles Club in October 1991. Ever since that gig, Strangelove's line-up has remained: Patrick Duff (vocals), Alex Lee (guitar, keyboards), Julian Pransky-Poole (guitar), Joe Allen (bass) and John Langley (drums).

For the year or so after the Bath gig, Strangelove played sporadically, drawing on upwards of forty compelling and unusual songs that appeared to have only one thing in common - their one word titles. Four of these songs formed their debut EP - the "Visionary EP" - which was released on tiny indie label Sermon in 1992. The band's second single on Sermon, "Hysteria Unknown", was produced by Donald Ross Skinner (of Julian Cope's band) and was recently described by Caitlin Moran in The Times as one of the greatest songs ever written.

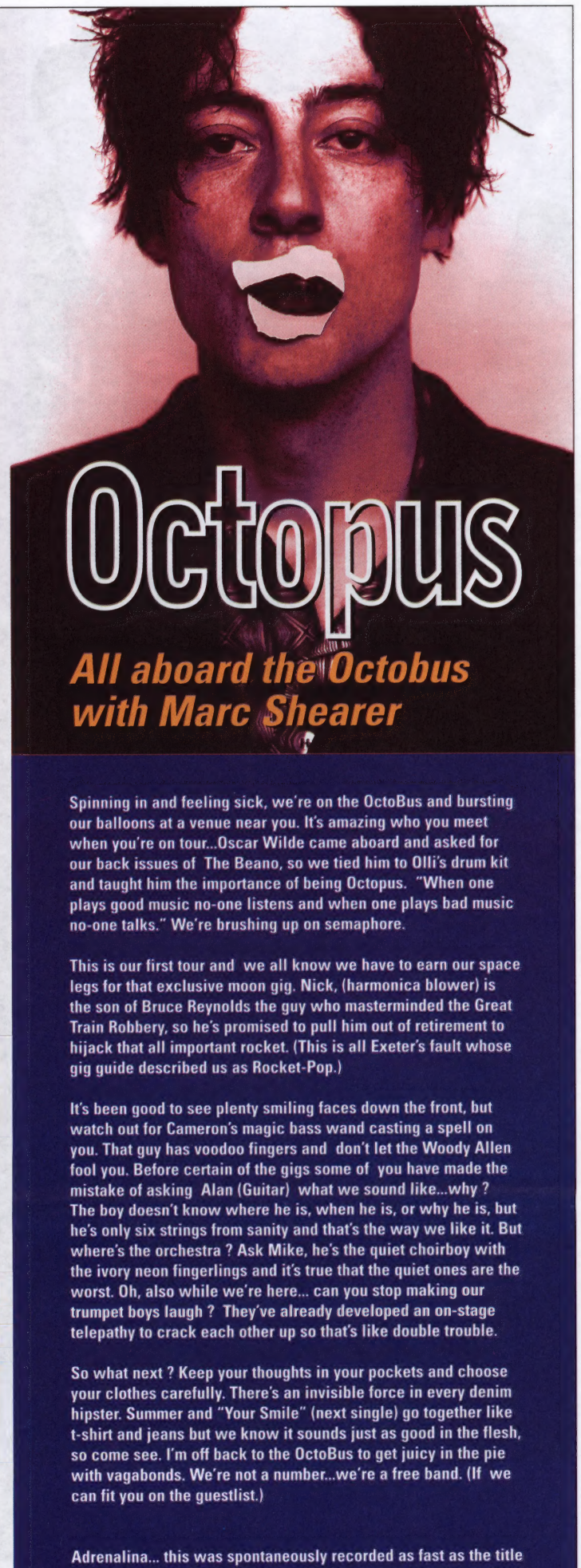
Strangelove signed to Food/Parlophone in 1993 and in the months that followed were to meet producer Paul Corkett who has worked with them on both albums, helping to attain the precise balance between wig-out rock urgency and carefully-layered guitars that their music requires. In 1994, they recorded the "Time For The Rest Of Your Life" album - and the classic single of the same name - receiving some surprised and delighted reviews, plus the deep respect of influential musicians such as Radiohead, Manic Street Preachers (whose Nicky Wire said that the album "fits staring out of the window and watching the rain in a small valley town") and Suede.

The winter 1994 tour saw some of the band's best shows to date, each show ending with Patrick singing the last words to the 13-minute set-closer "Is There A Place?" entirely unamplified, to astonished applause. Having in the past supported Radiohead and the Manic Street Preachers, Strangelove then toured Britain and Europe with Suede in early 1995, including a London show at the Royal Albert Hall. In Europe, in a spirit of mutual admiration, Suede played a Strangelove song in their set, "She's Everywhere" (indeed Brett Anderson and Richard Oakes of Suede both sing backing vocals on the track on the new album). Strangelove returned the compliment by playing Suede's "Killing Of A Flashboy".

Having recorded "Love & Other Demons" in late-1995, Strangelove's comeback gig at London's Camden Monarch in April 1996was a triumph from first song to last. Rarely has Patrick looked so happy, or a band sounded so locked into their music. Far from the waste-laying thunderstorms of 1992, Strangelove shows are now sweaty, 'inclusive', good-humoured events, pulling the audience in, making them glad to be a part of it all.

Part of this band's difficult reputation is based on their insistence on being regarded as nothing less than the best live band in the country, a claim that can now be made with some serious factual back-up. The remainder is down to their records, and "Love & Other Demons" is one of the strongest, most personal, most persuasive albums anybody will release this year.

Strangelove are an English band that rocks like the Pixies. They write the best 10-minute songs and the catchiest 3-minute singles. They can be as gentle on acoustic guitars as they are vicious with electric ones. They don't do what they're supposed to. And now it's clear that they were right not to.



Spinning in and feeling sick, we're on the OctoBus and bursting our balloons at a venue near you. It's amazing who you meet when you're on tour...Oscar Wilde came aboard and asked for our back issues of The Beano, so we tied him to Olli's drum kit and taught him the importance of being Octopus. "When one plays good music no-one listens and when one plays bad music no-one talks." We're brushing up on semaphore.

This is our first tour and we all know we have to earn our space legs for that exclusive moon gig. Nick, (harmonica blower) is the son of Bruce Reynolds the guy who masterminded the Great Train Robbery, so he's promised to pull him out of retirement to hijack that all important rocket. (This is all Exeter's fault whose gig guide described us as Rocket-Pop.)

It's been good to see plenty smiling faces down the front, but watch out for Cameron's magic bass wand casting a spell on you. That guy has voodoo fingers and don't let the Woody Allen fool you. Before certain of the gigs some of you have made the mistake of asking Alan (Guitar) what we sound like...why ? The boy doesn't know where he is, when he is, or why he is, but he's only six strings from sanity and that's the way we like it. But where's the orchestra ? Ask Mike, he's the quiet choirboy with the ivory neon fingerlings and it's true that the quiet ones are the worst. Oh, also while we're here... can you stop making our trumpet boys laugh ? They've already developed an on-stage telepathy to crack each other up so that's like double trouble.

So what next ? Keep your thoughts in your pockets and choose your clothes carefully. There's an invisible force in every denim hipster. Summer and "Your Smile" (next single) go together like t-shirt and jeans but we know it sounds just as good in the flesh, so come see. I'm off back to the OctoBus to get juicy in the pie with vagabonds. We're not a number...we're a free band. (If we can fit you on the guestlist.)

Adrenalina... this was spontaneously recorded as fast as the title suggests, but that's misleading... this is as smooth as the smile it sends. A situationist snapshot of some photos we can't show. You'd be laughing too.

UK TOUR DATES

[supporting SLEEPER]

MAY		
19	Wolverhampton	Civic Hall
20	Cambridge	Corn Exchange
21	Norwich	Uea
22	Nottingham	Rock City
23	Sheffield	Octagon
25	Hull	City Hall
26	Glasgow	Barrowlands
27	Edinburgh	Queens Hall
28	Newcastle	Mayfair
30	Lancaster	Sugarhouse
31	Liverpool	Royal Court
JUNE		
01	Manchester	Academy
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07	London	Brixton Academy

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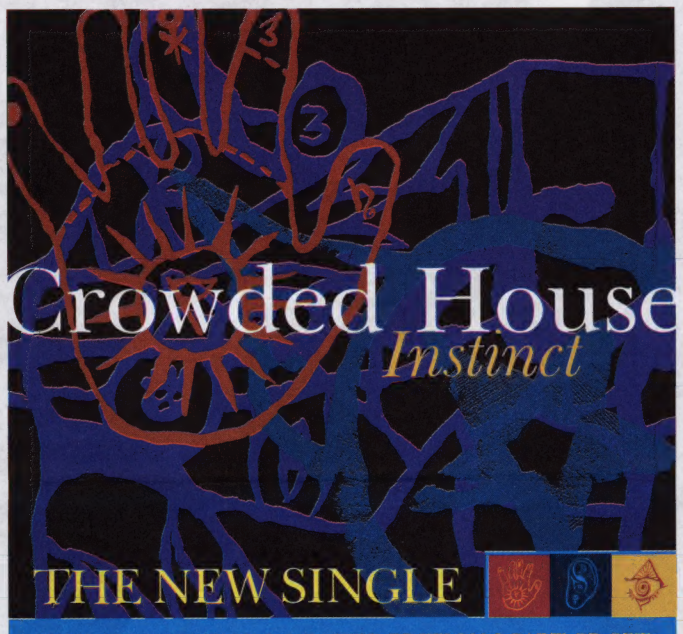

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